

## 34th Commandant's Priorities

*Our Marines and Sailors in combat are our number one priority.*

With this in mind, we will focus on the following:

- Achieve victory in the Long War
- Right-size our Corps to achieve a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio
- Provide our Nation a naval force that is fully prepared for employment as a MAGTF across the spectrum of conflict
- Reset and modernize to “be most ready when the Nation is least ready”
- Improve the quality of life for our Marines and our families
- Rededicate ourselves to our Core Values and warrior ethos
- Posture the Marine Corps for the future

# CMC Bullets

Version: 20081121

The following are excerpts from recent CMC speeches in which he discusses:

- **This Generation of Marines**
- **Current Operations**
- **The Long War**
- **Stress on the Force**
- **Our Families**
- **Grow the Force / Recruiting**
- **Long-term Security Concerns**
- **Expeditionary Force / Naval Character**
- **Maritime Strategy**
- **Seabasing**
- **MV-22 Osprey**
- **EFV**

## **This Generation of Marines**

MS. COLLINS: Are you impressed with those men and women? Do they continue to impress you, you know, as many years as you've been doing this?

GEN. CONWAY: You know, years ago, a bunch of us with silver hair sat around and we worried some that this new generation of Marines might make good Marines — a new generation of youngsters, Americans — might make good Marines and soldiers. We have seen them in combat, and it's eye-watering. This is a tremendous generation who understands the crisis the country faces. They're willing to step forward and do the job and they're courage, their team play, is just incredible to behold.<sup>1</sup>

AND

We have a Nation of 300 million Americans now. Less than 1 percent of those wear the uniform of any service. Far less than that wear our uniform. But yet, you have stepped up at a time when the Nation is in crisis. You're here because you want to be here. You are volunteers who step forward and take the fight to a very cowardly enemy. We owe you for that. When you, for the rest of your life — whether you stay for three years or you stay for 30 years — when you walk into that pub or that restaurant or that theater, you do so with your head held high because you are America's warrior class. You have stepped up at a crisis in this Nation's history when they needed for you to do so, and you have chosen to be officers of Marines. God bless you all and we'll see you in the field.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from 11 Nov interview with CNN's Heidi Collins

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from 2 October speech at a TBS Mess Night

AND

I chatted with a young Marine in Ramadi and I said, "Why did you join the Marine Corps?" He said, "Well, sir, I'll be honest with you. When I was 11, they attacked the World Towers." He said, "You know, I was scared. I had no idea that our country could be hit that hard." He said, "By the time I got to be 13, I was pissed off about it. And now, I'm 18 and I'm doing something about it."

And I think that's representative of the way a lot of these kids feel. We saw a surge right after 9/11 with those that were of age, but I didn't have an appreciation maybe until recently that there's a residual out there in some of the younger kids as well. So anyway, recruiting is going very well. I'm proud to say, we get great Marines out of Chicago and lots of other places around the states with our guys, the recruiting establishment in general.<sup>3</sup>

## **Current Operations**

The Sergeant Major and I got back from both those places [Iraq and Afghanistan] in August this year. We're going back for Christmas, and I can tell you that one is going pretty good, and the other one not so good, and that both Iraq and Afghanistan are not wars. They're the first battles of a long war and when we flush those people from those locations, they're going somewhere else. And sooner or later, we're going to be that somewhere else until we crush this movement and return the religion to the peaceful Muslims, who will once again regain control. That's our formula for victory, but there's going to be some time between now and then.

In Iraq, we've had rotation after rotation of great young Marines, Sailors and soldiers in the Anbar Province that have made a difference. In the fall of '06, in the middle of what was a very hotly contested day-to-day fight with the al Qaeda, and I would say the Sunni nationalists, the senior sheikhs came to us and said, we now realize that you're not our worst enemy; al Qaeda is. They indiscriminately murdered our women and children. They're showing us a 15th century lifestyle that we don't find the least bit attractive, but now they want to intermarry our women. Maybe that was the last straw, but in any event, they said, if you will join with us, we will slaughter these people and that's what's been happening since the fall of '06.

So when you go there today, there's just tremendous progress to be seen and you can drive down the streets of Fallujah, drive across the Highway of Death, and drive through Ramadi, as we did last time and the people are building and the people are looking forward to a higher quality of life.

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<sup>3</sup> Excerpt from address to the participants in the 24 Oct Marine Corps Business Executive Forum

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It's a tribute to the great people that have been there now since '04 — the job that they've done with regard to just perseverance, patience, trigger control, and trying to show the Iraqis that we're about creating a better quality of life.

We also went to Afghanistan. It's not nearly as encouraging a story there. In fact, I think it's going to take some time. You've got drug money in the south of the country on the one hand, and safe haven not far away. Those are the two of the major elements of any insurgency. I think it's going to be a while before we solve those things. It's going to take some time for that Afghan government to really get traction.

Iraq is going to be a rich country soon. If you look at the elements of what it takes to make a rich country, it starts with fresh water, a fertile land, an exportable product, a literate population, and a sea port. I would add leadership, I think, to that list, but Iraq has got virtually all of those things. Afghanistan has very few of all those things and so at some point, it becomes how good is good enough in Afghanistan.

Over the last few months, we have had more casualties in Afghanistan than we have had in Iraq, with a significantly smaller population of Marines. So it's going to be a nasty place for a while and I suspect a lot of you are going to see the mountains and the valleys and the deserts of Afghanistan.

We are probably going to stay in the South. There's a reason for that. First, that's where we have gotten sort of ingrained to begin with. Secondly, our old 46s are finally meeting their match. Today, and at least when we were there in the heat of Afghanistan, the 46s carried about five or six combat loaded Marines. It'll be a little better when the weather gets cold. So that's has to be a little bit problematic for us and I think the South is better because its terrain is not as high as up in the eastern province.

How soon we transition to a larger presence is going to be a national-level decision. We're saying we think it will be good for us. We're saying that we don't do nation-building. It's not our core competency and yet that's what we're doing significantly right now in Iraq.<sup>4</sup>

AND

I also believe that al Qaeda has shifted focus. I think that they know they have really blown the movement in Iraq. I think, personally, what you see there is a rear-guard movement — that they have shifted their focus of effort not necessarily to Afghanistan, but to Pakistan. We should all fear the nexus of terrorism and nuclear weapons, and I see it as no place closer than what we're experiencing today with what's happening in Pakistan. With certainly the overflow and the commensurate attacks associated with the increased presence also being evident in Afghanistan. The fact is, I think we're going to be there [Afghanistan] for a while.

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<sup>4</sup> Excerpt from CMC address on 30 October 2008 to Delta Co lieutenants at The Basic School

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We're there right now in larger numbers than we have been. I sat in a meeting with the Secretary of Defense, who made the decision a little less than a year ago now, that we would send in the 24th MEU and Second Battalion, Seventh Marines. I explained to the secretary at the time, sir, you can do that, but the fact is, you're going to keep our forces at surge through the fall of this year, through November or so of this year. We don't like it, but we understand about spring and summer offensives and we think it's the right thing to do, so we're going to bite that bullet.

Those Marines have gone in as a Marine Air-Ground task force. In the case of the 24th MEU, they have done a tremendous job and now they are on their way home. 2nd Battalion 7th Marines is still there — having been extended — and they are in preparation right now for another Special Marine Air-Ground task force built around Third Battalion, Eighth Marines that is to go in to relieve them.

So, it is what it is. Whether or not that's a precursor for more forces following, we can talk about that if you want to — but the answer is, we don't know. The fact is that we do see what is going to be a pretty lengthy fight, I think, in Afghanistan. We think that we, and the great sailors that support us, are going to be smack in the middle of that for some time to come.<sup>5</sup>

## **The Long War**

You folks are going to go to war. Okay, don't let there be any doubt in your mind at this point as you undergo your training. Pay attention to what's taking place here. You'll be paying increased attention, I think, when you get to Quantico and even beyond that at your MOS [military occupational specialty] producing schools.

There is no doubt in my mind that this is a long war. I think that Iraq and Afghanistan are the first battles of that war, but there are many more battles, probably in places that we don't know about yet, where these people are going to go. It's like putting your thumb on Jell-O. We're going to squeeze them out, we're not going to kill them all; they're going to someplace else, and we're going to have to go there because otherwise they will be there planning attacks on the United States. That's their strategy. So we have to absolutely crush this movement to the extent that we can then allow the moderates in the religion to once again take charge. That's how you eventually terminate this thing. The reasonable people in this religion say, "We've had it to here with these guys, and we're going to stop this, we're going to stop the extremism and get a level of control on it because it is not conducive to our families and to raising children."

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<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from 2 October Navy Flag Officer and Senior Executive Symposium

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That's what we face and that's what you face in particular in the months and years to come. I think you're going to be very comfortable with that. The training that you are going to get is going to prepare you in ways that at this point you can't imagine. But it's going to be very tough training. It's going to be goal-oriented training; it's going to be mission accomplishment type of training. You're going to be going at it with some of the same people that are alongside you right now but with hundreds of other young Americans who also want to step forward and fight for their country. So it's very rewarding certainly in that regard. Being a Marine is very rewarding.<sup>6</sup>

AND

In any military brief, you will first have the intelligence situation followed by the operational situation. I'd like to follow that format as we talk here about the Long War. We think we know what the al Qaeda strategy is. We intercepted it first and it's become more public as they get on TV and provide their messages to an open public.

We believe that strategy consists of five steps. The first step is to declare jihad; they've done that. They've had some of the "brothers" respond. Fortunately for us, many, many more millions have not. The second step is to exorcise Western influence out of the Middle East, and we think that's the phase that we're in now. We think that they're trying to return to the old Caliphate of centuries ago.

The third phase is to attempt to bring the West to bankruptcy, and they think they can do that through control of the oil supplies. They know that we're dependent. In all of our economies really – we're dependent on oil well past 2025, 2030, and they think if they can get control, either through destruction or outright control, that's a way to bring us to our knees, cause us to be unable to react to their overtures, and perhaps go about the defeat of the Western world. By the way, in that phase, they also talk about gaining the strength necessary to turn to and destroy Israel. So that's a vital part of their thinking as well.

I think in phase four and really probably during all of this, if they can manage it, you would see attacks in the United States by extremists and in Western Europe. Some of that again has already occurred, targeting the economic structure and attempting to bring us to our knees.

And then in the final phase – and they say this may take 100 years – they're looking at a world-domination type of effort. Their map shows a world that's all green, and so we understand that to be their strategy. And actually, you hear references to that from time to time when you hear Zawahiri or even bin Laden on the wire.

My personal belief – and that's all it is at this point. I can't give you an intelligence expert that will say this is accurate. I have had this conversation with certain other commanders who do believe the same way, but my personal belief is that the al Qaeda

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<sup>6</sup> CMC address to midshipmen at Texas A&M on 17 Oct 2008

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has shifted focus. I think, in ten years, we'll discover that they have decided that they cannot win in Iraq, but that they can possibly be successful in Pakistan or Afghanistan. I think that's where the preponderance of their effort is right now.

## **Stress on the Force**

We've been at it a long time. The deployments are seven months gone and seven months home. We've been able to keep that as our mainstay. I offer that to you sort of in contrast to what the Army has evolved to do. They started out at 12 [months], and at one point, they had to move to 15 [months] just to be able to satisfy all the requirements, and I tell you, that was really hard on the soldiers.

We've been able to maintain seven [month deployments], and it took some doing inside this building. My predecessor had to go to the secretary of defense a couple or two or three times to explain to him the value of seven [month deployments], and the fact that a new unit there was able to maintain a relationship with the Iraqis in particular – that there wasn't a spike in casualties when a new unit came in who were not familiar with the ground. The good news is every battalion we send back has probably got about 40 percent who are combat vets. We bring on new Marines and we get the seasoning that goes with experienced hands and that's really a pretty good thing.

The other thing that's helped us, though, is that we also will rotate people out after about three or four years in the operating forces and we send them to what we call "B-billets." Some of them are in Chicago recruiting. They're on I-I duty working with the reserves. They're here at our headquarters or at Quantico, or they're doing a whole host of things for about three years where essentially they're sleeping in their own rack and they're with their families and they're not deployed. When they come back then, they're rested; they're pretty refreshed by that point in time, and they're ready to get back into the fight – sometimes more so than their families are, but they're Marines and there's a reason we join the Corps.

If you do the math, with an Army unit once again, and you read that a soldier has deployed three different times, that's about six years or seven years. He's there for a year at a time. He's home for a year before he has to go back. So they're in their operating force units for a lot longer than we are, and I think, again, that's probably going to be wearing over time as this long war continues.

So [General] George Casey and I have had that conversation. I think he's looking at ways to mitigate that and we certainly wish him success in that, because the Marine Corps wins battles. The Army wins wars. We're a part of this, but a comparatively small part. So the health of the United States Army is a concern, I think, for us all.

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The good news coming out of all of this, I think, for us is the resiliency of our Marines. I would say myself, I am finding it incredible. We track about a dozen indicators each month — metrics, if you will — to determine health of the force, the tone of the force, and again, it's almost eye-watering, with the exception of suicides, which seems to be up — I mean, it's sort of a national phenomena. It's up for us the last couple of years and a slight trend upward in divorce. All the other indicators that you might look at and that would give you some cause for concern — UA rates, desertion rates, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, spousal or child abuse — are all down compared to what they were in 2001.

Our captains — that mid-grade key leadership role for us — the company commanders, if you will — are staying at a rate beyond what they were doing in 2001. 91 percent of our captains are staying with us beyond their initial tour of duty. Again, I just think those are incredible things and it shows that we've got a great young generation of Americans out there that feel very strongly that the country is in a crisis and needs their help and they're staying with us. The resiliency, again, I think is something we've all very proud of.<sup>7</sup>

## **Our Families**

Now, the families are the brittle part. They remind us that there is nothing ideal about seven months. In seven months, you can't have a baby. You can be in the front end or the back end, but you can't do both in seven months, so we've got to be able to figure that out. We're trying to go to one to two — we're trying to go to seven months deployed and 14 months home, but that's out some ways. We don't see that on the horizon anytime soon based on current levels of commitment.

The other cultural thing, I think, that's in our favor is that you don't stay in operating forces very long. If you're there for three years, that's a normal tour. If you're there for four or five years, you're probably an aviator. They tend to stay a little longer, but not much. Then we put our people out on what we call "B" billets. They're in headquarters, or they're in training units, or they're recruiting, or they're on I and I duty. The fact is, they're sleeping in their own rack and spending some quality time with their families in most of those assignments, and then they come back.<sup>8</sup>

AND

Trust me when I say we are paying attention to it — serious attention. Historically, we have put about \$5 million of our Marine Corps budget against family programs. Ladies and gentlemen, this year, based on some windfall and based on some redirections of our budget, that figure is \$130 million.

## **Grow the Force / Recruiting**

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<sup>7</sup> Excerpt from 24 October CMC address to Marine Corps Business Executive Forum

<sup>8</sup> Excerpt from 2 October Navy Flag Officer and Senior Executive Symposium



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We were given the authority to grow our Marines Corps about two years ago now just after I became the Commandant. In fact, it's kind of funny. We knew that we had to either see the requirement go down or we needed to grow the force. Now, people are expensive. Growing Marines is an expensive proposition within the DOD, and yet, again, apparently we needed to do so. So I had my folks develop a brief on why we thought we needed to do that and I was prepared to go in to see Secretary Rumsfeld at the right point in time.

All of a sudden, Secretary Rumsfeld is not here. It's Secretary Gates, Dr. Gates, which none of us knew very well, but I went in to see him anyway, and I was ready with my brief. And I said, "Sir, I think we need to grow the Marine Corps." He said, "Jim, I agree with you." So I put my brief away and we started talking about how much, how soon, and what the cost was going to be, and those kinds of things, because he saw it substantially the same way. As again, with the Army, our growth is about 27K, theirs is about 65,000, but that does come with some costs.

In the early going, in discussion with our Center for Naval Analysis, who does a lot of our research, and with the recruiting establishment, we wanted to do two things. We wanted to grow as rapidly as we could, but we wanted to retain the quality as high as we could. So, you know, the DoD standard for all services today is 90 percent high school graduates. That's just an amazing figure to start with. Our self-imposed standard is 95 percent. We wanted to keep those numbers in that range.

The Center for Naval Analysis said, you know, in order to be able to do that, you're going to have to drop the requirements. In order to approach a larger envelope of people, you're going to have to open up the aperture, if you will, to get in the kinds of numbers that you need, because the propensities for all three major ethnic groups in the country today is not to join. The mentors, the parents, the pastors, the coaches, the teachers, are all saying, well, the military might be good for you, but not right now because you're going to find yourself in a setting very much like you see on that screen and you could get hurt, and maybe we just don't recommend you to do that. And so we were bucking up against all of that, in some ways an unpopular war.

But we didn't want to drop the quality. We didn't want to take that step unless it was absolutely necessary, although people were saying it may be absolutely necessary because if you lose those pools — we enter young people, sign them on, we establish what we call pools that we ship from then as the requirement is on us or as the availability opens at our recruiting folks. So if you lose those pools, it takes years to recover and so those are the things that were kind of heaping on us.

We wound up talking to the recruiters themselves, talking to the staff sergeants and the gunnys, and in some cases, the master sergeants out there, saying, okay, guys, you're where the rubber meets the road. What do you think? And what they said to me, personally, when I called was, "You don't want to change the standards. The standards

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are what make us different. They're what make us special in this environment. If you drop those standards, we lose our identity. You tell us what number you need, Commandant, and we'll go out and we'll get them for you somehow, but for god's sakes don't change the standards."

So that first year, the target was 5,000. We brought in 7,000, and 96.2 percent high school graduates. This last year, we thought 7,000 or 8,000; we brought in 12,000. We're going to close out the growth next year and I think that says several things. One, we've got some tremendous recruiters out there. We've got two fights going overseas and one fight going in the country, and we're winning two out of three as we sit here this morning.

And certainly, our recruiters are just simply out of the park with the right kinds of Marines, but secondly, I think it says something about our Nation. We've got us a great young strain of Americans out there who want to join the Marine Corps and they want to go fight. And it just says something very strong about your children and your nephews and nieces, in some cases, that I think is just awfully wholesome.<sup>9</sup>

## Long-term Security Concerns

My job, and the job of those great generals who just got introduced along with a whole lot of others, is to look to the future, though. I would offer just a couple of thoughts to you folks tonight in terms of what we think that future might look like just so you can do perhaps a long-range plan.

We have a visions group at Quantico that's looking at that period 2020 to 2025; we think that's the sweet spot. What they're telling us is that the world is going to be very different, that demographics are going to change the world as we know it. They're telling us that the world's population is going to blossom but it's going to be in about 75 percent of the case within about 35 miles of a sea coast, which really talks to the importance of the Navy-Marine team.

They tell us that oil is going to continue to be the thing that greases our machines. It will be critically important to us, but they also tell us that water will be as important as oil and that nations will flat go to war in order to be able to have a freshwater drinking supply for their people.

They tell us that the United States will still be important by then, but it will be a much more multi-polar world. And we're going to have to learn to live with a resurgent Russia, an empowered China and India and a collective European Union. We're going to have to be less predominant perhaps then we have been in the last couple of decades.

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<sup>9</sup> CMC address to the Marine Corps Business Executive Forum on 24 Oct 08.

Maybe most importantly, they tell us that although we could see the rise of a near competitor, what we're probably going to see is what we saw for instance in 2006 with the Israeli dust-up. That is hybrid conflict — powerful non-state actors with fourth- and fifth-generation systems that can knock out an entire tank battalion if you give them the chance and you're not prepared to take them on.

So those are the threats that we see. That's the Corps we're building. We think it needs to be a two-fisted force, able to engage in that hybrid conflict with expertise but also able to do the high-end things should the country need that kind of a defense. That points us, I think, towards maybe three areas where we can continue to use your help.

The first, of course, is troop protection. And, again, I think we've done that very, very well. You look at the MRAP as perhaps the classic example of the country, the government, the military, and industry all coming together to provide the best for our troops — whatever it took.

I continue to prime the pump every time I meet with one of you folks and I say, "Build me a helmet that will stop 7.62, okay?" It's out there somewhere. We know it is. The threat is such that we're going to continue to have a need for that. But it talks to the fact that we need first-class lightweight protection for our troops wherever we go. We also need to enhance our lethality. They tell us that on this hybrid battlefield, what we're likely to see is a situation where, analogous to if you're on a football team and your bus arrives at the stadium to play, you don't play on the grassy field; you play the game in the parking lot and it's a whole different game. You've got to be precise and you've got to be lethal. Once again, you've got to be able to protect your troops against high-energy weapons at close range.

All that stuff has got to be light. You know, we've become a second land army in a very real sense in Iraq. We don't like that, but we've always said we do windows, right, so that's where we find ourselves today.<sup>10</sup>

## **Expeditionary Force / Naval Character**

I think that we've got a pretty good story. And this is what it is. It's got everything to do with expeditionary. In recent years, we've had some pretty fat years with the Corps where DoD budgets are concerned. You've seen it; I've seen it, too.

I saw something the other day that came out that said — and this was out of CENTCOM — that "the infrastructure must be created in Afghanistan before the combat troops can be deployed." I'll say that again: "The infrastructure must be built before combat troops can be introduced." Now, my dad was a soldier in World War II. He was in the 45th Infantry Division across Salerno and Anzio. I think he would immediately roll over in his grave to think that that's where we are today.

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<sup>10</sup> Excerpt from 1 Oct speech at Modern Day Marine Expo banquet

That's somewhat the attitude, but that's not our attitude. We spoke to President Bush last week and the president asked one of them [other service chief], "What is expeditionary? Define it." When it came my turn to talk, I said, "Mr. President, here's the Marine version of expeditionary: Expeditionary equals fast, austere and lethal." And I said, "by the way, sir, emphasis on the austere – we think we do that better than anybody." He said, "That's because you're the Marines." And we went on to the next briefing.<sup>11</sup>

AND

We need to regain our naval expeditionary flavor. We've gotten away from that. We still float MEUs — but less than we did, and we spend much less time at sea in those gray-hulled ships that we call amphib. Yet we think that's what we offer that is unique to the Nation. So we've got to get back to doing that, and, right now, frankly, we simply have had to take a rain check. We don't have the force structure to do all those things that the combatant commanders would have us do aboard those ships, but we want to. We see the need for them, and we see that it's our particular niche, again, in terms of the country's defense structure.<sup>12</sup>

That leads to the next point, and that is the challenge to stay expeditionary. There are a lot of people laying claim to that capability these days — hanging their hat on that rack. I guess that's okay when budgets are fairly lavish and you can afford to, as a Nation, have all of your forces try to move to being expeditionary. But my definition of expeditionary — in conjunction with our brothers in the Navy — is fast, austere, and lethal.

Not everybody can make that claim — even though they might say that they consider themselves expeditionary. We consider that this Navy-Marine Corps-Coast Guard team is truly the expeditionary capability of this great Nation. And that there may come a time when the Nation cannot afford to have everybody lay claim to that — with the readiness requirement of forces that it is associated with. So it's a challenge for us, I think, to carve that out and understand where we are, who we are, and resource it appropriately.<sup>13</sup>

## **Maritime Strategy**

I'd like to do what the organizers have asked me to do, and that is talk about my Marine Corps first of all, but I'd like to give you just a couple of thoughts, if I can, on how I see this maritime strategy and what it means to our Corps. First of all, we are a maritime nation, and I think there is some concern on the part of the Navy, and I'll certainly say in the Marine Corps, that we not forget that our strength, our commerce, so much of what we depend on a daily basis comes across those seas out there. Your Navy in particular these days is out there securing these sea lines of communication so that we can enjoy the

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<sup>11</sup> Excerpt from CMC address to commanders at the 21 Oct 08 Commanders Course

<sup>12</sup> Excerpt from 28 October CMC address to the Navy New Flag Officer and SES Symposium

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

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quality of life that we have. We should not take it for granted, and there is cost associated with it. I think that's something that again, the CNO in particular would ask that you understand.

I believe – and I know it is a part of the national philosophy – that our Nation is best defended by forward presence, by our existence elsewhere, so that no threat reaches our shores. If we're going to have a fight, we'd rather it be someplace else other than our east or west coast of these United States. That forward presence out there, conducted by Navy ships and Marines embarked, and now the Coast Guard, I think is a very positive thing. It lends itself to what we call engagement, and that's something I think that's a little different about this concept, this strategy.

When you go to a meeting these days with the combatant commanders and the service chiefs, you hear a lot of discussion about engagement with developing nations, in an effort to preclude combat taking place there at a later point in time. We're trying to do things with these nations that will increase their quality of life — that will increase the capabilities of their security forces. We're trying to make sure that fundamentalism or extremism is simply not a tactic, and in the process perhaps we'll avoid some of the situations that we see at work right now in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It's not just military engagement. Increasingly we believe, and we have said such to the president in a tank session, that there needs to be engagement through all elements of Americans abroad. The entire interagency of the United States government needs to join with us with these developing nations to give them their insights and their assistance as may be needed. They are much more capable in certain dimensions than we are, and so we want to partner with those people, have them create an expeditionary capability to join us out there so that, again, the fundamental needs of some of these developing nations can be met.

Lastly, it's my belief that our Nation enjoys working with partner nations. We almost enjoy a coalition when we want to do something. Now there's an old Russian toast that says, "May all your enemies be coalitions." So there's jeopardy in coalitions, I think we'll have to admit that. But the fact is that we like being partnered with other nations, and that certainly includes the high seas. Some of the people who are critical of the strategy have said, "General, does that mean that we will have to have a vote, a collective vote before we go through something on behalf of this great Nation?" The answer, of course, is, absolutely no. If it is in our Nation's vital interest, we, the Marine Corps and Navy and Coast Guard, are going to do what has to be done. We're not going to ask for a vote.

In the meantime, I think it is helpful if we can be with these other nations, projecting our capabilities when and where they may be needed. So that's just a couple of bullets, if I

can, on what you may have heard elements of this morning, and my description to you of this thing on maritime strategy.<sup>14</sup>

## **Seabasing**

We're keenly interested in the concept of Seabasing. We are now developing a concept that will allow ships to literally mate at sea, using a series of inter-connector vessels that will serve essentially as a port and an airfield — using the sea as maneuver space where nations do not desire U.S. forces ashore, where we choose to minimize our footprint ashore for any combination of reasons, simply for the over-the-horizon kind of capacity that it gives the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard team. We see that as very exciting, and we continue to develop and experiment and I would offer the day is not far away where that kind of capability will exist not only by U.S. forces but potentially by other nations' forces as well.

AND

Let me talk quickly about Seabasing. You have Seabasing, the verb, and Seabasing, the noun. We have been doing Seabasing for a long time. A Marine Expeditionary Unit operates from a seabase. It's not intended to go ashore, but it certainly has that capacity. We find our strength and our support from the bowels of the ships.

What we're talking about with a new paradigm in Seabasing is the idea that we can establish a joint port and airfield at sea that would allow for follow-on forces, allow for combined forces, allow for whatever we thought we needed to move ashore, either in a lethal environment or in a humanitarian environment.

It actually involves a program of 14 ships that can interlock at sea; that we hope would involve the arrival of Army fast sealift ships that connect to this platform and offload on to interconnectors or lighterage that would take us ashore. We see tremendous usage as the program comes to life. If there's one thing that we see in the Marine Corps that may be seen as transformational for us, it's probably Seabasing.

## **MV-22 Osprey**

The airplane is doing great things for us in combat. It's got a checkered past, I think y'all have probably heard; we've lived with it now for a number of years — probably made some institutional mistakes as we brought it along, but I like to think we're past those things because we're now on the second tour of the Osprey in theater. There's a third one coming, and then we'll probably put it aboard ship just to answer for ourselves a number of questions when we put a new capability like that aboard the amphibs.

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<sup>14</sup> Excerpt from 18 Sept "Conversations with the Country" Speech in North Carolina

# CMC Bullets

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There is a competing demand potentially to have it go to Afghanistan, if we see a surge of capability in Afghanistan — just the perfect airplane to go and you're going to see that [referencing a demonstration of the aircraft]. So we'll have to cross that bridge, I guess, when we get there. But, anyways, it's doing tremendous things. When I step aboard a helicopter, I watch the crew chief and if he's happy, I'm happy. If he gets excited, I get a little excited. He's [the crew chief] got a real response because this is a tremendous aircraft. Our only challenge is trying to challenge the bird. Trying to see just what the potential is there and not treat it like a helicopter. It's not just a helicopter.<sup>15</sup>

## EFV

We've got programs out there that we're going to have to see, I think, protected — if that's the right word — as we continue to go. I think we all agree that we have fat years and lean years; we're probably in for some lean years, and we may have to prioritize. But there are some things that we think are absolutely and vitally important. One of those is our Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle.

We fully accept that the Navy's ships are not going to go closer than 25 miles to another nation's shore for reasons that have to do with the security of the ships and the safety of the Marines and Sailors aboard. Recognizing that, we think we've got to find a way to get onto land and right now, our AAVs are just too slow and too vulnerable in order to be able to do that.

We have been developing for some time what's called the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle that actually is a sea-skimmer in a sort of way — it gets up on plane at about 30 knots or so and gets us to where we need to go pretty quickly. The program has had its problems — had its issues. It is, technically I think, pushing the envelope in terms of the engineering capacity to build it, but we consider that it is absolutely vital, again, as we tie all this capability together.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Excerpt from CMC address to Marine Corps Business Executive Forum on 24 Oct 08

<sup>16</sup> Excerpt from 28 October CMC address to the Navy New Flag Officer and SES Symposium